

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /013 R

DRAFTED BY: INR/RSE:FFOLDVARY; IMATUSEK; PCOSTOLANSKI; RFARLOW  
APPROVED BY: INR/DDR:MR. STODDARD  
INR/RSE:PKCOOK  
EUR/EE:TGERTH/BGOUTIN/GGLENN  
EUR/RPM:BCLARK/JGALLUP  
INR/RSE/EE:IMATUSEK  
EUR/CE:VGRAY  
EUR/EE:SFROMOWITZ

-----074672 031456Z /47/64,

P 022042Z AUG 78  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO OIC PTC  
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS  
SECDEF WASHDC 0900-0905  
CIA WASHDC 0697-0702

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 195038

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (LINE 16 OF TEXT OMITTED)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XH, PGOV; SHUM

SUBJECT: NATO ASSESSMENT SERIES CONTRIBUTION

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TO AIG 6006  
AIG 6007  
B T  
NATO CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL FROM WASHINGTON  
NADA/ASSESSMENT/AUG 01/MFA WASHINGTON

POLITICAL ANALYSIS: EASTERN EUROPE: IMPROVED CHURCH-STATE

RELATIONS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. RECENT CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES PROVIDE FRESH EVIDENCE OF THE GROWING DISPOSITION OF MOST COMMUNIST REGIMES TO REACH AN ACCOMMODA-

TION WITH THE VARIOUS ORGANIZED CHURCHES AND TO NORMALIZE TIES WITH THE VATICAN. THE EVIDENCE DOES NOT SIGNAL AN ACTIVE ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE TWO IDEOLOGICAL ADVERSARIES, BUT IT DOES REFLECT:

(A)--A MUTUAL DESIRE TO EMPHASIZE AREAS IN WHICH CHURCH AND STATE CAN COEXIST; AND

(B)--A GROWING IF GRUDGING RECOGNITION BY THE REGIMES OF THE CONTINUED SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCHES.

2. THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE DEGREE OF CHURCH-STATE ACCOMMODATION VARY FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY. GENERALLY, HOWEVER, THERE IS AN INCREASING COINCIDENCE OF INTERESTS BETWEEN THE REGIMES AND THE NATIONAL CHURCHES, PARTLY AS A RESULT OF THE VATICAN'S OSTPOLITIK AND PARTLY BECAUSE OF THE UNFOLDING DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIAN AND MARXIST THINKERS.

3. AN IMPORTANT MOTIVE BEHIND THE REGIMES' CONCILIATORY  
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ATTITUDE IS THEIR DESIRE TO:

(A)--ENLIST CHURCH SUPPORT IN COPING WITH ACUTE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS;

(B)--PROMOTE NATIONAL UNITY; AND/OR

(C)--IMPROVE THEIR "HUMAN RIGHTS" IMAGE AT HOME AND ABROAD IN THE CONTEXT OF DETENTE AND THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT.  
END SUMMARY.

4. A SHARED INITIATIVE; CONVERGENCE OF INTERESTS

5. THE VATICAN'S RECENT ACTIVISM IN EASTERN EUROPE IS THE RESULT OF THE OSTPOLITIK. BECAUSE OF OLD REFLEXES AND A PROFOUND MISTRUST ON BOTH SIDES, THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS AT FIRST MOVED VERY SLOWLY.

6. THUS FAR, YUGOSLAVIA IS THE ONLY EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRY TO HAVE ESTABLISHED FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE VATICAN (1970). AMONG THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES, POLAND HAS HAD--SINCE 1974--A HALFWAY-HOUSE ARRANGEMENT THAT COULD

EVENTUATE IN FULL RELATIONS. A POLISH EMBASSY OFFICER IN ROME WITH AMBASSADORIAL RANK SERVES AS A PERMANENT LIAISON WITH THE VATICAN, WHILE NUNCIO-AT-LARGE ARCHBISHOP POGGI MAKES PERIODIC VISITS TO WARSAW AS A HOLY SEE REPRESENTATIVE.

7. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE VATICAN AND POLAND RECENTLY AGREED ON A PERMANENT VATICAN REPRESENTATIVE IN WARSAW WITH LESS THAN FULL AMBASSADORIAL STATUS. POGGI'S LATEST STAY IN POLAND (MAY 23-JUNE 6) COULD WELL HAVE BEEN CONNECTED WITH SUCH A DEVELOPMENT. ALTHOUGH BOTH SIDES HAVE LONG BEEN KNOWN TO BE READY FOR SUCH A STEP, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS HAS FOUNDERED IN THE PAST ON THE RESISTANCE OF CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI. THE CARDINAL HAS  
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FEARED AN UNDERMINING OF HIS PREEMINENT ROLE IN DEALING WITH THE POLISH REGIME.

8. THERE HAVE BEEN PERIODIC REPORTS THAT HUNGARY MAY MOVE IN THE SAME DIRECTION AS POLAND IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

9. SINCE THE PRECEDENT-SETTING VISIT TO THE VATICAN IN 1967 BY THEN SOVIET PRESIDENT PODGORNYY, OTHER EAST EUROPEAN LEADERS HAVE MET WITH POPE PAUL: PRESIDENT TITO OF YUGOSLAVIA (1971), CEAUSESCU OF ROMANIA (1973), AND ZHIVKOV OF BULGARIA (1975), AND PARTY LEADERS KADAR OF HUNGARY (1977) AND GIEREK OF POLAND (1977). THE MODEST IMPROVEMENT IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS THAT HAS FOLLOWED THESE VISITS REFLECTS:

(A)--THE WILLINGNESS OF BOTH SIDES TO TAKE A MORE SOPHISTICATED APPROACH TO SOLVING OLD PROBLEMS; AND

(B)--AN IMPLICIT RECOGNITION BY THE REGIMES THAT THE CHURCHES REMAIN A SIGNIFICANT SOCIO-POLITICAL INSTITUTION DESPITE 30 YEARS OF ATHEISTIC AGITATION.

10. AN ACCELERATION OF THIS POLICY SHIFT--FROM CONFRONTATION TO ACCOMMODATION--SEEMS TO BE TRACEABLE TO THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES, EAST BERLIN, JUNE 29-30, 1976. THE FINAL DOCUMENT ADOPTED AT THAT CONFERENCE--AFTER HEATED CLASHES BETWEEN THE HARDLINERS LED BY MOSCOW AND THE ACCOMMODATIONIST EUROCOMMUNIST PARTIES LED BY THE SPANIARDS AND THE ITALIANS--CONTAINED THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES:

"THE COMMUNISTS AND WORKERS' PARTIES PARTICIPATING IN THE CONFERENCE STRESS THAT THE WORKING PEOPLE  
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HAVE COMMON INTERESTS AND THAT UNITED ACTION BY THEM PLAYS A DECISIVE ROLE IN THE EFFECTIVE DEFENCE OF THEIR RIGHTS. THEY, THEREFORE, CONSIDER IT IMPORTANT THAT ALL WORKING PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, UNITE THEIR EFFORTS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THEIR VITAL INTEREST.

"EVER BROADER CATHOLIC FORCES, MEMBERS OF OTHER CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES AND ADHERENTS OF OTHER FAITHS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE AND FOR DEMOCRACY AND PEACE. THE COMMUNIST AND WORKERS' PARTIES RECOGNIZE THE NECESSITY OF DIALOGUE AND JOINT ACTION WITH THESE FORCES, WHICH IS AN INSEPARABLE PART OF THE STRUGGLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPE IN A SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY AND IN THE DIRECTION OF SOCIAL PROGRESS."

11. DESPITE THE PROPAGANDISTIC NATURE OF THE DOCUMENT, THE EXPRESSIONS OF TOLERANCE AND PROFFERED COOPERATION WITH THE CHURCHES ARE STRIKING, ESPECIALLY WHEN COMPARED WITH THE BLAND APPEAL ADDRESSED TO THE CHURCHES BY A SIMILAR CONFERENCE IN 1967 (KARLOVY VARY). SINCE THE CONCILIATORY WORDS OF THE 1976 DOCUMENT HAVE BEEN BACKED UP BY DEEDS THE EAST EUROPEAN REGIMES SEEM SURELY TO HAVE EMBARKED ON A SERIOUS EFFORT TO USE THE CHURCHES IN LEGITIMIZING THEIR RULE.

12. A PART OF THE EXPLANATION FOR THE UNFOLDING CHURCH-STATE ACCOMMODATION IN EASTERN EUROPE LIES IN THE CHANGING ATTITUDES OF VARIOUS CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS. THE SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED IN A RECENT REPORT ON CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC APPEAR APPLICABLE TO OTHER CHURCHES IN THE REST OF THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES. ACCORDING TO BISHOP HANS-JOACHIM FRAENKEL OF GOERLITZ DISTRICT (DIE WELT OF APRIL 4):

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"...THE CHURCH IN SOCIALISM IS THE CHURCH WHICH BETWEEN THE ABYSSES OF UNPRODUCTIVE CONFRONTATION AND UNTRUSTWORTHY ACCLAMATION TRIES TO PURSUE ITS COURSE AS A WITNESS-BEARING COMMUNITY IN THE FREEDOM TO SERVE GRANTED BY CHRIST AND THUS IN THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.

"THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE AND CHURCH DURING THE LAST THREE DECADES WAS FREQUENTLY PAINFUL. FOR THE CHURCH, IT WAS A LEARNING PROCESS; BUT AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, THE STATE, TOO, DEEPENED ITS UNDERSTANDING. I AM THINKING HERE OF THE ELIMINATION OF CERTAIN CLICHES, BUT ALSO OF THE INCREASED UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING THE NATURE OF A PROTESTANT CHURCH, WHICH WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO SUBMIT TO BEING RESTRICTED TO RITUAL AND WORSHIP...."

13. ON BALANCE, IT IS CLEAR THAT SINCE 1976 MOST OF THE EAST EUROPEAN REGIMES HAVE BEGUN ACTIVELY TO SEEK THE COOPERATION OF THE CHURCHES AND THE VATICAN AND HAVE SHOWN A SURPRISING WILLINGNESS TO EXTEND CERTAIN LONG-WITHHELD CONCESSIONS. THE PACE AND NATURE OF ACCOMMODATION HAVE DIFFERED FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY ACCORDING TO THE ROLE THE CHURCHES HAVE PLAYED HISTORICALLY AND THE ACUTENESS OF THE DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES FACING EACH REGIME. THERE APPEARS TO BE A MODEST BUT GROWING CONVERGENCE OF INTEREST IN WORKING TOWARD A MODUS VIVENDI BASED ON THE SHARED RECOGNITION OF THE FACT THAT RELIGION AND COMMUNIST RULE REMAIN IMBEDDED IN EAST EUROPEAN LIFE.

14. RECENT IMPROVEMENTS

15. THE OVERTURES LAST YEAR BY THE HUNGARIAN AND POLISH  
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REGIMES TO THEIR CHURCHES AND THE VATICAN HAVE BEEN WIDELY NOTED. THEY USHERED IN A GENERALLY WARMER CLIMATE IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS, RESULTING IN A NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS IN BOTH COUNTRIES. CHURCH-STATE DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, THOUGH LESS CRISIS-ORIENTED THAN IN POLAND, SHOW A SIMILAR IMPROVING TREND. THE COUNTRY-SKETCHES THAT FOLLOW DEAL ONLY WITH COUNTRIES WHEREIN SIGNIFICANT CHURCH-STATE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE OCCURRED IN THE LAST TWO YEARS.

16. EAST GERMANY: SURPRISINGLY, THE MOST DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT HAS TAKEN PLACE IN EAST GERMANY, PREVIOUSLY ONE OF THE MOST ATHEISTIC COUNTRIES IN THE AREA. THE 3 1/2-HOUR TALK ON MARCH 6, 1978, BETWEEN PARTY LEADER HONECKER AND BISHOP SCHOENHERR OF BERLIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE EAST GERMAN FEDERATION OF EVANGELICAL (LUTHERAN) CHURCHES--THE FIRST SUCH MEETING IN 20 YEARS--WAS ACCORDED UNUSUAL MEDIA PUBLICITY. ALTHOUGH NO SPECIFICS ON THE TALK ITSELF HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED, WESTERN PRESS REPORTS BASED ON CHURCH SOURCES SUGGEST THAT IT YIELDED UNPRECEDENTED CONCESSIONS FOR THE GDR'S 8-MILLION-STRONG EVANGELICAL CHURCH (SOME 50 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION).

17. THE REPORTED CONCESSIONS INCLUDED:

(A)--MONTHLY RELIGIOUS BROADCASTS (THE FIRST WAS AIRED ON APRIL 29) AND TELEVISED SERMONS ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS (E.G., THE EASTER SERMON FROM EAST BERLIN ON MARCH 26 AND THE WHITSUNTIDE SERMON FROM DRESDEN ON MAY 13);

(B)--PERMITS TO BUILD CHURCHES IN NEW RESIDENTIAL AREAS;

(C)--REIMBURSEMENT TO THE CHURCH (IN THE FORM OF RENTAL FEES) FOR EXPROPRIATED FORESTS AND AGRICULTURAL LANDS RETROACTIVE TO 1977;

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(D)--INCLUSION IN THE STATE-PENSION SYSTEM OF FULL-TIME CHURCH EMPLOYEES;

(E)--EXPANDED PASTORAL WORK IN PRISONS AND HOSPITALS;

(F)--ENFORCEMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL PROHIBITIONS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PRACTICING BELIEVERS; AND A

(G)--PLEDGE OF STATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO COMMEMORATE IN 1983 THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF MARTIN LUTHER'S BIRTH.

THESE CONCESSIONS COULD MARKEDLY IMPROVE THE SITUATION OF THE PROTESTANTS AND COULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITHIN THE ENTIRE SOVIET BLOC.

18. IN PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MAGDEBURG BISHOP KRUSCHE AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY AND CHURCH AFFAIRS PAUL VERNER, THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP APPARENTLY HAD PUSHED FOR GREATER TRAVEL AND EMIGRATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC. REJECTING THIS DEMAND, HONECKER OFFERED, INSTEAD, A SERIES OF CONCESSIONS THAT REPORTEDLY CAUGHT THE CHURCH LEADERS BY SURPRISE.

19. THE REASONS FOR HONECKER'S SUDDEN MAGNANIMITY MAY HAVE INCLUDED HIS DESIRE TO:

(A)--MAKE USE OF THE CHURCH'S PRESTIGE TO SUPPORT THE GDR'S DRIVE FOR A SEPARATE IDENTITY AND HONECKER'S OWN LEGITIMACY; AND

(B)--PREVENT THE CHURCH, WITH ITS WELL-ORGANIZED APPARATUS, FROM BECOMING A FOCAL POINT FOR POPULAR DISCONTENT (E.G., INTELLECTUAL DISSENT AND GROWING CONSUMER DISSATISFACTION).  
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AT THE SAME TIME, THE REGIME'S CONCESSIONS ARE IN PART ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE SUCCESS OF BISHOP SCHOENHERR'S OWN TACTICS, WHICH REST ON THE BELIEF THAT CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIALISM SHARE CERTAIN ALTRUISTIC VALUES AND THAT THE CHURCH SHOULD NOT PLAY AN ADVERSARY ROLE IN A SOCIALIST SOCIETY. IF HONECKER DELIVERS ON HIS PROMISES, THE EAST GERMAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH COULD BECOME ONE OF THE MOST POLITICALLY INFLUENTIAL CHURCHES IN EASTERN EUROPE (SECOND ONLY TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN POLAND).

20. HONECKER'S PLEDGE THAT THE COUNTRY'S CHRISTIANS SHOULD "FEEL AT HOME AND FREE OF DISCRIMINATION" PASSED ITS FIRST MAJOR TEST ON MAY 28. ON THAT DAY, AN ESTIMATED 50,000 CHRISTIANS ASSEMBLED IN LEIPZIG (IN TWO CITY HALLS AND ON THE PRESTIGIOUS FAIRGROUND) FOR THE CLOSE OF A THREE-DAY CHURCH FESTIVAL. HELD UNDER THE MOTTO "TO LIVE MEANS TO HAVE AN AIM," THE FESTIVAL WAS THE LARGEST CHURCH GATHERING IN EAST GERMANY SINCE 1954; REPORTEDLY, TWO OTHER GATHERINGS HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED TO BE HELD IN THE CATHEDRAL CITIES OF ERFURT AND STRALSUND THIS SUMMER.

21. THE REGIME'S PERFORMANCE ON ITS PLEDGE TO THE PROTESTANTS WILL NO DOUBT BE CLOSELY WATCHED BY THE COUNTRY'S 1.3 MILLION ROMAN CATHOLICS (8 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION) WHO APPARENTLY ARE NEXT IN LINE TO BE COURTED BY THE REGIME. ON MAY 13, IN A SCENARIO SIMILAR TO THAT EMPLOYED WITH THE PROTESTANTS, A MUCH-PUBLICIZED MEETING TOOK PLACE BETWEEN A RANKING REGIME OFFICIAL AND BISHOP THEISSING, ONE OF EAST GERMANY'S FOUR APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATORS. BUT DESPITE THE REGIME'S STATED WILLINGNESS TO EXTEND "EQUAL RIGHTS TO THE CATHOLICS," PROGRESS IN REACHING AN ACCOMMODATION WITH THE MORE MILITANT CATHOLIC CHURCH IS LIKELY TO BE SLOW. COMPLICATING THE EVENTUAL SETTLEMENT IS THE FACT THAT ONLY ONE OUT OF SEVEN GERMAN DIOCESES FALLS WITHIN EAST GERMANY; THE REST ARE SHARED WITH WEST

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GERMANY. THE HONECKER REGIME'S DESIRE TO REDRAW DIOCESAN BOUNDARIES--AND THUS CREATE A SEPARATE EAST GERMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH--HAS SO FAR FOUNDERED ON OPPOSITION FROM BOTH THE VATICAN AND THE WEST GERMAN EPISCOPATE.

22. POLAND: BESET BY INTRACTABLE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND A BURGEONING DISSIDENT MOVEMENT, THE GIEREK LEADERSHIP LAST

FALL APPEALED FOR SUPPORT TO THE 33-MILLION-STRONG (95 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION) POLISH CATHOLIC CHURCH AND TO THE VATICAN. GIEREK'S FIRST MEETING (OCTOBER) WITH CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI, PRIMATE OF POLAND, GAVE A MUCH-NEEDED LIFT TO HIS OWN SAGGING IMAGE AND HELPED PAVE THE WAY FOR THE FIRST-EVER MEETING, IN DECEMBER, BETWEEN A POLISH PARTY LEADER AND THE POPE. PRIOR TO THE GIEREK-WYSZYNSKI MEETING, THE REGIME GRANTED LONG-DENIED PERMITS TO BUILD SOME 40 NEW CHURCHES, AND THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT CHURCH-SPONSORED BROADCASTS TO SHUT-INS WILL SOON BE ALLOWED. (NEGOTIATIONS ARE CURRENTLY UNDER WAY FOR EVANGELIST BILLY GRAHAM TO VISIT THE SMALL BAPTIST COMMUNITY AND HOLD REVIVALIST MEETINGS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY IN OCTOBER.)

23. REFLECTING THE IMPROVED CHURCH-STATE CLIMATE BUT REVEALING THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM THAT REMAINS, POLAND'S LEADING POLITICAL WEEKLY, POLITYKA (APRIL 22), PUBLISHED AS PART OF A DIALOGUE AN OUTSPOKEN BUT NOT NECESSARILY CHURCH-APPROVED ARTICLE BY A CATHOLIC MEMBER OF THE PARLIAMENT. REJECTING MARXIST "SIMPLIFICATIONS AND DISTORTIONS" REGARDING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE ARTICLE CALLED FOR A STATE ADMINISTRATION THAT WAS "NEITHER RELIGIOUS NOR ANTIRELIGIOUS" AS A CONDITION FOR A TRUE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE AND FOR A "GENUINE NATIONAL UNITY."

24. IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE JUNE 1976 WORKER RIOTS, THE  
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GIEREK LEADERSHIP HAS SOUGHT TO PROMOTE THE PERCEPTION THAT THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS IN POLISH CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS. THIS PERCEPTION, HOWEVER, HAS NOT BEEN SHARED BY THE CHURCH, WHICH CONTINUES TO REGARD THE MODEST IMPROVEMENTS AS MORE SYMBOLIC THAN REAL. FROM THE CHURCH'S POINT OF VIEW, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS THAT NEED TO BE RESOLVED BEFORE CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS--AND INDEED THOSE BETWEEN WARSAW AND THE HOLY SEE--CAN BE SAID TO BE FULLY NORMALIZED. A KEY LONGSTANDING CHURCH DEMAND, REAFFIRMED MOST RECENTLY AT THE TWO-DAY EPISCOPATE CONFERENCE (MAY 4-5), IS TO GAIN LEGAL RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION AS A "PUBLIC BODY," RATHER THAN MERELY A GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS. EVEN WITHOUT SUCH RECOGNITION, HOWEVER, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE POLISH CATHOLIC CHURCH POSSESSES THE GREATEST VITALITY AND REMAINS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AND POWERFUL AMONG ALL THE CHURCHES IN EASTERN EUROPE.

25. HUNGARY: AS PART OF ITS POLICY OF "NATIONAL RECONCILIATION," WHICH SEEKS TO GAIN THE SUPPORT OF THE POPULACE, THE KADAR REGIME HAS SINCE THE 1960S SOUGHT TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH ALL THE MAJOR RELIGIOUS DENOMINA-



TIONS, PARTICULARLY THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH (6 MILLION MEMBERS OUT OF A POPULATION OF 10.6 MILLION), AND WITH THE VATICAN. SINCE THE FEBRUARY 1976 INSTALLATION OF ARCHBISHOP PRIMATE LEKAI AS SUCCESSOR TO THE LATE CARDINAL MINDSZENTY, THE KADAR REGIME'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND RELIGION IN GENERAL, HAS BECOME LESS HOSTILE, AND RELATIONS WITH THE VATICAN HAVE IMPROVED MARKEDLY. KADAR HAD A SUCCESSFUL AUDIENCE WITH POPE PAUL IN JUNE 1977 AND HIS FIRST MEETING WITH CARDINAL LEKAI SOON THEREAFTER. IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR, THE VATICAN APPOINTED TWO NEW HUNGARIAN BISHOPS AND TRANSFERRED TWO OTHERS WITH NO VISIBLE SIGN OF FRICTION WITH BUDAPEST.

26. WITH THESE CHANGES, INCLUDING THE RESTORATION OF THE  
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CENTURIES-OLD PRIMATE'S TRIBUNAL AS THE HIGHEST CHURCH COURT OF APPEAL (IN ABEYANCE SINCE 1949), THE HUNGARIAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY HAS ATTAINED A FULL COMPLEMENT OF ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE WORLD WAR II.

27. WHILE THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN HUNGARY REMAINED RELATIVELY IMMUNE TO SOME OF THE HARSHER METHODS OF OPPRESSION USED AGAINST THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AFTER 1949, THEY, TOO, HAVE BENEFITED FROM THE IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE KADAR REGIME AND THE CATHOLICS. THE VISIT BY BILLY GRAHAM LAST SEPTEMBER (HIS FIRST TO A WARSAW PACT COUNTRY) WAS FOLLOWED BY THE VISIT THIS JUNE OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, SR. ASIDE FROM THE OBVIOUS PUBLIC RELATIONS BENEFIT, THE VISITS WERE OBVIOUSLY INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE THE REGIME'S EVENHANDED APPROACH TO THE COUNTRY'S 3 MILLION PROTESTANTS. AFTER DECADES OF CONFRONTATION, THE REGIME IN 1977 EXTENDED LEGAL RECOGNITION TO THE SMALL CHURCH OF THE NAZARENES, INCLUDING THE GRANTING OF AMNESTY FOR THOSE OF ITS MEMBERS WHO HAD REFUSED MILITARY SERVICE AS CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS AND THE LIFTING OF THE REQUIREMENT TO HANDLE WEAPONS WHILE DOING MILITARY SERVICE.

28. THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY, THE THREE MAJOR RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS--CATHOLIC, REFORMED (CALVINIST), AND EVANGELICAL (LUTHERAN)--HAVE PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN SHAPING AND MAINTAINING HUNGARIAN NATIONAL AWARENESS AND TRADITIONS, A ROLE EXCEEDED ONLY BY THAT PLAYED BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN POLAND. BUT UNLIKE POLAND'S CASE, THE IMAGE OF THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY IN HUNGARY SUFFERED FROM THE CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH THE COUNTRY'S RULING CIRCLES BEFORE WORLD WAR II. THE COMMUNIST REGIME HASTENED TO EXPLOIT THIS PERCEPTION IN ITS ANTIRELIGIOUS CAMPAIGN. AS  
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A RESULT, THE PRACTICE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH IN HUNGARY TODAY IS BUT A FAINT ECHO OF WHAT IT HAD BEEN BEFORE WORLD WAR II, AND THE CLERGY, ESPECIALLY AT THE LOWER HIERARCHICAL LEVELS, REMAINS WEAKENED AND DEMORALIZED.

29. ON THE OTHER HAND, DESPITE THE STILL-EXISTING ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS, THE CHURCHES TODAY BREATHE MORE FREELY THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE THE COMMUNIST TAKEOVER IN 1948. LATELY, THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL STIRRINGS AND EVEN A REVIVAL OF EVANGELICAL FERVOR AMONG THE HUNGARIAN POPULACE, CUTTING ACROSS ALL CLASSES AND AGE GROUPS AND INVOLVING ALMOST ALL DENOMINATIONS.

30. CZECHOSLOVAKIA: THE INSTALLATION ON MARCH 6 OF CARDINAL TOMASEK AS ARCHBISHOP OF PRAGUE UNDERSCORED THE RECENT MODEST IMPROVEMENT IN VATICAN-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS. THE APPOINTMENT OF TOMASEK, WHO WAS MADE CARDINAL IN JUNE 1977, MARKED THE BEGINNING OF A REVERSAL IN THE TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRAGUE AND THE HOLY SEE THAT FOLLOWED THE ARREST OF THE LATE CARDINAL BERAN IN 1950 AND HIS FORCED EXILE IN THE MID-1960S. THE ELEVATION OF TOMASEK COINCIDED WITH AN AGREEMENT WHICH MADE THE ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTIONS IDENTICAL WITH CZECHOSLOVAK NATIONAL BOUNDARIES FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE FOUNDING OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1918. UNTIL NOW, THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS IN SLOVAKIA WERE TECHNICALLY SUBORDINATE TO THE HUNGARIAN PRIMATE SEE OF ESZTERGOM.

31. DESPITE SUCH TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENTS, THE PRAGUE REGIME REMAINS THE LEAST FORTHCOMING OF ALL WARSAW PACT REGIMES IN

REACHING A MEANINGFUL ACCOMMODATION WITH THE CHURCHES. (NOTE: IN A COUNTRY OF 15 MILLION PEOPLE, 73 PERCENT ARE NOMINALLY ROMAN CATHOLIC WHILE 20 PERCENT ARE PROTESTANTS, MOSTLY CZECH BRETHREN AND LUTHERAN, SLOVAKIA.) THIS WAS EVIDENT DURING THE FIVE-DAY NEGOTIATIONS IN PRAGUE  
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(APRIL 22-27) BETWEEN REGIME OFFICIALS AND A VATICAN DELEGATION LED BY ARCHBISHOP POGGI. THE TALKS ENDED WITHOUT PROGRESS ON ANY OF THE KEY OUTSTANDING ISSUES, WHICH INCLUDED THE:

(A)--SEVERE RESTRICTIONS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PRIESTLY DUTIES, EXACERBATED BY THE ACUTE PROBLEM OF NUMEROUS

LONG-UNFILLED VACANCIES IN THE CHURCH HIERARCHY;

(B)--LIMITED ACCESS TO RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHILDREN OF PRACTICING CATHOLICS;

(C)--NUMEROUS CURBS ON ADMISSION TO THE TWO CATHOLIC SEMINARIES; AND

(D)--LIMITED SCOPE OF RELIGIOUS PUBLICATIONS, TOGETHER WITH THE ANTIRELIGIOUS CAMPAIGN WAGED IN THE MASS MEDIA.

32. THE SITUATION OF THE AUTONOMOUS PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS IS ALSO PRECARIOUS. BUT IN COMPARISON WITH THE CATHOLICS, THESE GROUPS HAVE SUFFERED LESS, BECAUSE OF THEIR SMALLER SIZE AND CLOSER IDENTIFICATION WITH SUCH ATTRIBUTES AS NATIONALISM, EGALITARIANISM, AND SOCIAL REFORM, WHICH ARE LESS INIMICAL TO THE REGIME. SOME PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS (E.G., JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, BAPTISTS, METHODISTS, AND CONGREGATIONALISTS), HOWEVER, REMAIN IN THE FOREFRONT OF RESISTANCE TO THE REGIME ATTEMPT TO HINDER THEIR RELIGIOUS PRACTICES.

33. NEITHER THE CATHOLIC NOR THE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES, HOWEVER, ATTRACT ANYTHING CLOSE TO THE BELIEVERS' ALLEGIANCE WITNESSED IN NEIGHBORING POLAND OR HUNGARY. THIS FACT EVIDENTLY PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN SHAPING THE

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PRAGUE REGIME'S LESS CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE AND POLICY BOTH TOWARD THE VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS AND TOWARD THE VATICAN.

34. ROMANIA: THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS RECENTLY AGREED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE VATICAN A "STATUTE" THAT WOULD

LEGALIZE THE GOVERNMENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE VATICAN. A DRAFT OF THE "STATUTE" WAS THE SUBJECT OF PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS DURING THE VISITS TO BUCHAREST BY ARCHBISHOP POGGI, FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 7, AND ANOTHER VATICAN OFFICIAL IN EARLY APRIL AND LATE JUNE. NO RESULTS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED THUS FAR. FOR ROMANIA, CONSULTATIONS WITH THE VATICAN ENHANCE ITS "HUMAN RIGHTS" IMAGE IN THE WEST; MOREOVER, MOST OF THE COUNTRY'S 1.3 MILLION ROMAN CATHOLICS ARE ETHNIC HUNGARIANS, AND THE MOVE IS PROBABLY ALSO DESIGNED TO APPEASE THIS INCREASINGLY RESTIVE MINORITY.

35. IN A COUNTRY OF 21.5 MILLION, THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH CLAIMS THE NOMINAL ALLEGIANCE OF UP TO 85 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION. (NOTE: THERE ARE ALSO 1.3 MILLION ETHNIC HUNGARIAN AND ABOUT 250,000 GERMAN-SPEAKING ROMAN

CATHOLICS AND SOME 1.5 MILLION ROMANIAN-SPEAKING UNIATE CATHOLICS. THE BREAKDOWN OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS, THE MAJORITY OF WHOM ARE HUNGARIAN-SPEAKING, IS AS FOLLOWS: REFORMED-CALVINISTS (700,000); BAPTISTS (200,000); PENTECOSTALS (180,000); EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS (PLYMOUTH BRETHREN, 120,000); AND SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS (50,000); THE NUMBER OF JEWS IS VARIOUSLY ESTIMATED BETWEEN 50,000 AND 80,000.) THE ISSUE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN ROMANIA HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN A COMPLICATED ONE WHOSE ROOTS ARE CLOSELY LINKED WITH THE PROBLEMS OF ROMANIAN NATIONALITIES, HISTORY, IDEOLOGY, POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND PERSONALITIES. THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH (WHOSE ADHERENTS ARE VIRTUALLY ALL ROMANIAN-SPEAKING) IS CONSIDERED BY THE REGIME AS THE NATIONAL CHURCH AND GETS FAVORED TREATMENT. CONFIDENTIAL

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THE ROMANIAN-SPEAKING CONGREGATIONS OF THE OTHER DENOMINATIONS REPORTEDLY ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST MORE THAN THEIR

GERMAN- AND HUNGARIAN-SPEAKING BRETHREN. THIS IS APPARENTLY AN ATTEMPT TO PREVENT THESE DENOMINATIONS FROM MAKING GREATER INROADS AMONG ROMANIANS AT THE EXPENSE OF THE MORE COMPLIANT ORTHODOX CHURCH.

36. DESPITE, OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF, BUCHAREST'S DIFFERENTIATED APPROACH TOWARD ITS VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS ALONG NATIONALITY LINES, THE LEVEL OF RELIGIOUS LIFE AND EVEN SPIRITUAL RENEWAL HAS BEEN ON THE RISE IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. ESPECIALLY IN TRANSYLVANIA, THE CRADLE OF THE BAPTIST MOVEMENT IN EASTERN EUROPE, DATING FROM THE 16TH CENTURY, THE RATE OF GROWTH AMONG BAPTISTS, PENTECOSTALS, AND EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS IS BELIEVED TO BE ONE OF THE HIGHEST IN THE WORLD.

37. FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS REMAINING

38. NUMEROUS FORMS OF INCREASINGLY SUBTLE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST BOTH CLERGY AND LAITY PERSIST IN ALL EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. AMONG THE GRIEVANCES THAT RESULT FROM CONFLICTS AND FRICTIONS BETWEEN BELIEVERS AND THE AUTHORITIES ARE:

(A)--EXCLUSION OF PRACTICING BELIEVERS FROM HIGH GOVERNMENT POSITIONS;

(B)--DIFFICULTIES FACING RELIGIOUS-MINDED STUDENTS IN GAINING ADMISSION TO UNIVERSITIES; AND

(C)--PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT ACCORDED TO NON-BELIEVERS  
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OVER BELIEVERS IN HIRING AND PROMOTION AT MOST PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT.

39. THUS, WHILE THE AUTHORITIES PROFESS TO VIEW RELIGIOUS BELIEF AS A PRIVATE MATTER, THE PRACTICING BELIEVER STILL FACES NUMEROUS PRACTICAL CONSTRAINTS ON HIS FREEDOM AND SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT. THE OFFICIAL LINE THAT "HISTORICAL MATERIALISM" WILL OVER THE LONG RUN OVERCOME "SOCIALLY AND SCIENTIFICALLY OUTMODED RELIGIOUS VIEWS" HAS NOT BEEN ABANDONED. THUS, "FREEDOM OF RELIGION" CONTINUES TO BE INTERPRETED IN THE NARROW SENSE OF FREEDOM OF WORSHIP ON CHURCH PREMISES, RATHER THAN IN THE WESTERN SENSE, I.E., THAT PRACTICING BELIEVERS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITY IN SECULAR SOCIETY.

40. PROSPECTS

41. THE RECENT IMPROVEMENTS IN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE SEEM TO REPRESENT A TACTIC OF EACH REGIME AS IT SEEKS TO RESPOND TO A VARIETY OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PRESSURES. YET THEY MAY HAVE LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANCE: THERE IS FULLER APPRECIATION EVERYWHERE OF THE TIME REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE AN ATHEISTIC SOCIETY. A REVERSAL OF THE CURRENT TREND SEEMS UNLIKELY BECAUSE OF THE ENDEMIC NATURE OF THE PROBLEMS FACING ALL OF THE REGIMES IN THE AREA.

42. AT THE SAME TIME, THE DECK WILL BE STACKED AGAINST THE CHURCHES AS LONG AS THE REGIMES DO NOT RENOUNCE THEIR ULTIMATE GOAL OF ACHIEVING AN ATHEISTIC SOCIETY. THERE IS NO INDICATION OF SUCH AN INTENT ON THE REGIME'S PART. ALSO, SIGNIFICANT SEGMENTS OF THE CLERGY AND OF THE PARTY APPARATUSES ENTERTAIN SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE WISDOM OF ANY CHURCH-STATE ACCOMMODATION OR AN ACCEPTANCE OF A MODUS VIVENDI.

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43. ON BALANCE, THE LONG-TERM PROSPECTS ARE FOR FURTHER, IF PIECEMEAL, IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SITUATION OF EASTERN EUROPE'S 60 MILLION ROMAN CATHOLICS AND SOME 20 MILLION PROTESTANTS. FACED WITH AN ARRAY OF SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND THE PRESSURES FOR GREATER HUMAN AND RELIGIOUS

RIGHTS, THE EAST EUROPEAN REGIMES ARE LIKELY TO LOOK TO

BOTH THEIR CHURCHES AND THE VATICAN AS HITHERTO UNTAPPED  
SOURCES OF LEGITIMATION AND RESPECTABILITY. VANCE

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Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014